

#### **NO. 4 NEWS RELEASE July 31, 1998**

The Fraser River Panel met today to consider Pacific Salmon Commission staff reports on the status of Fraser sockeye salmon stocks now entering fishing areas on the south coast of British Columbia and Puget Sound. Current assessments indicate that the Early Summer sockeye stocks are returning in numbers less than forecast by Canada Department of Fisheries and Oceans. The Panel today revised the early Summer-run size downward to 400,000 sockeye, or about 38% below the pre-season forecast of 642,000.

Summer-run sockeye stocks (Quesnel, Chilko, Stellako and Late Stuart) are now entering the area. Preliminary data suggest that this stock group will be below forecast, as well. In view of the strong indication that the pre-season forecast of 6,647,000 will not be met, the Panel today adopted a provisional run size of 4,000,000 Summer-run sockeye for interim management purposes.

Late-run sockeye stocks, including Adams River, Lower Shuswap River, Birkenhead River and Weaver Creek sockeye, appeared in test fishery catches in Johnstone Strait and Juan de Fuca Strait this week. The Adams/Lower Shuswap stock group is forecast to be in low abundance in 1998 and management concerns for this stock group will dictate reduced fishing time in all areas after mid-August.

The timing of arrival of Early Summer sockeye in coastal waters has been near the long-term average date in late July. The peak of Summer-run sockeye stocks is now anticipated to occur near the long-term average, as well, rather than the forecast of six days late.

Purse seine test fishery catches in Johnstone Strait increased sharply on July 28 while little change in catches has been noted in Juan de Fuca Strait. As well, fisheries this week on the two routes showed higher abundance in the northern approach route. While this observation may be associated with differential time of arrival on the two routes, the data suggest that the proportion of the run approaching the Fraser River via Johnstone Strait (i.e., the diversion rate) is significantly higher than the pre-season forecast of 62%.

Environmental conditions in the Fraser River and tributaries deteriorated further this week as record air temperatures were experienced in many parts of the watershed. Water temperature at Hells Gate increased to over 21 C, the highest ever recorded at this site. On the positive side, the discharge of the Fraser River is near the all-time low for the date, thus allowing unimpeded access of sockeye to the spawning grounds. However, when water temperatures rise above the average of 16-17 C in the Fraser River, spawning sockeye suffer elevated mortalities prior to spawning. Next week, DFO will provide predictions of the levels of pre-spawning mortality that could be expected in the Chilko and Quesnel sockeye stocks.

In order to harvest Summer-run sockeye, the Panel scheduled fishing times as follows:

#### **UNITED STATES FRASER RIVER PANEL AREA WATERS:**

##### **TREATY INDIAN FISHERY:**

**Areas 4B, 5 and 6C:** Drift gillnets open 12:00 pm (noon), Sunday, August 2 to 12:00 pm (noon) Friday, August 7.

**Areas 6,7 and 7A:** Open to net fishing 12:01 a.m. Monday, August 3 to 5:00 a.m. Thursday, August 6.

##### **NON-INDIAN FISHERIES:**

**Areas 7 and 7A:** Reef nets open 5:00 a.m. to 9:00 p.m. Saturday, August 1, and Sunday, August 2.

Gillnets open 7:20 a.m. to 11:59 p.m. Thursday, August 6 and Friday, August 7. Purse seines open 5:00 a.m. to 9:00 p.m. Thursday, August 6 and Friday, August 7.

#### **CANADIAN FRASER RIVER PANEL AREA WATERS:**

Remain closed to troll and net fishing.

The Panel will meet next at 10:00 a.m., Tuesday, August 4, by telephone conference to consider regulations for the Area 29 fishery.

**Fraser River Panel Sockeye Review**

Week of: Jul. 26 - Aug. 1, 1998

Date: July 31, 1998

Area	Gear	Weekly Catch	%Fraser	Fraser Sockeye	
				Weekly	Cumul.
<b>Commercial Catch</b>					
<b>Canada</b>					
Areas 1-10	Net			0	0
Areas 1-10	Troll			0	0
Areas 121-127	Troll			0	0
Areas 11-16	Net	180,000	100%	180,000	180,000
Areas 11-16	Troll	22,500	100%	23,000	23,000
Areas 17-18-29	Troll			0	0
Area 20	Net			0	0
Area 29	Net			0	0
Canadian Total				203,000	203,000
<b>United States</b>					
<u>Alaska</u>	Net			0	0
<u>Washington</u>					
T.I. Areas 4B/5/6C	Net	7,800	100%	8,000	14,600
T.I. Areas 6/7/7A	Net	5,800	100%	6,000	9,000
N.I. Areas 7/7A	Net	30,300	100%	30,000	36,500
U.S. Total				44,000	60,100
<b>Non-commercial Catch</b>					
PSC Test					19,800
Other Test					2,200
Fraser River Indian					17,200
Areas 12-124 Indian					1,700
Recreational					0
Charter					0
U.S. Ceremonial					0
Non-comm. Total					40,900
<b>Catch and Escapement</b>					
Catch Accounted-to-date					304,000
Potential Net Escapement (Mission esc. less IF & sport catch above Mission)					647,300
Total Accounted-to-date					951,300

**Gross Escapement (includes Pitt R. sockeye)**

Run	Stock/Group	Esc. Goal	Mission Esc.	AFS Below Mission	Total Esc.	% Complete
Estu	Early Stuart	170,000	169,100	100	169,200	100%
ESum	Early Summer	484,000	150,500	2,300	152,800	32%
Summ	Quesnel/Chilko	2,624,000	259,100	6,300	343,700	13%
	Late Stuart/Stellako	431,000	76,200	2,100		0%
Late	Birkenhead	246,000	0	0	0	0%
	Adam/Lshu	2,350,000	0	0		0%
	Weaw/L Misc.	361,000	0	0		0%